FOOTPRINTS
OF
THE HORSE.

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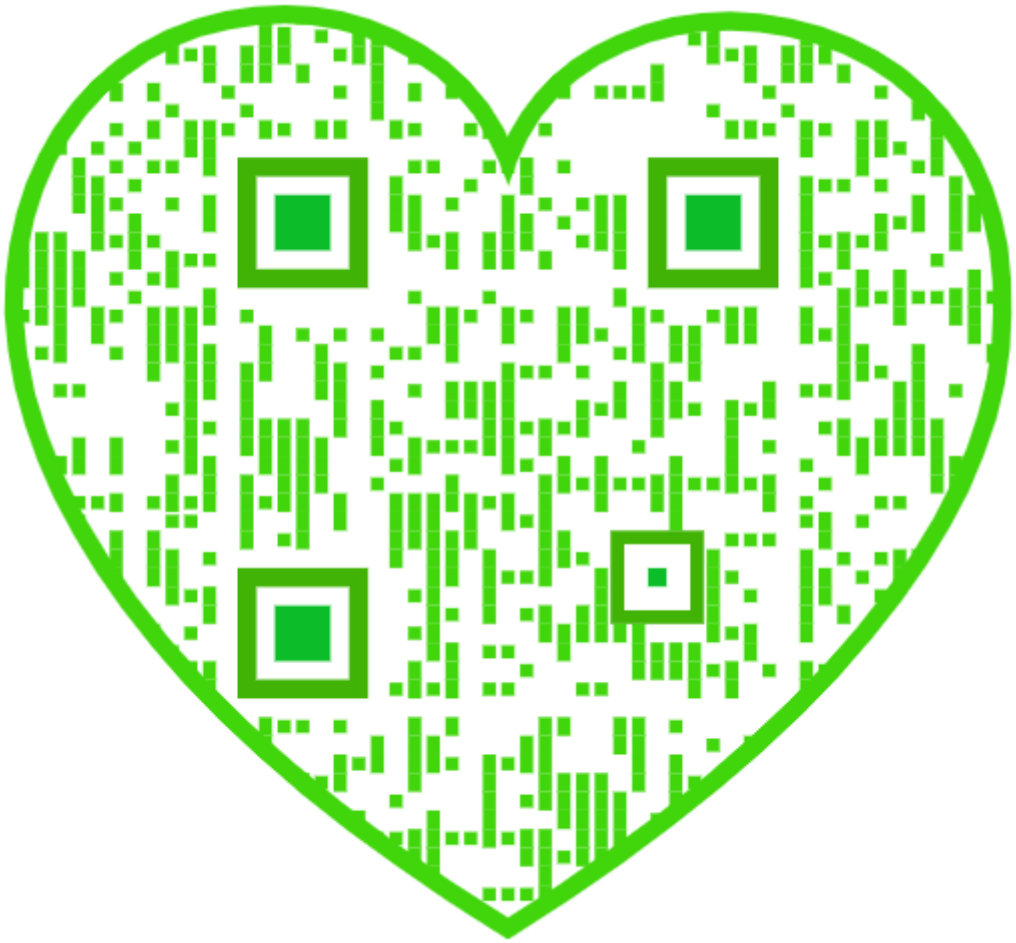

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FOOTPRINTS OF THE HORSE.

BY

"EOS,"

AUTHOR OF "GIFT POEMS."

LONDON:
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Dedicated

(WITH PERMISSION)

TO THE

RIGHT HON. JAMES, EARL OF CARDIGAN, K.C.B.

&c. &c.

COLONEL OF THE 11TH HUSSARS.

MY LORD,

With your permission I have the honour to dedicate to you this Poem, believing you to be as brave a Soldier and as perfect a Horseman as ever had the command of cavalry, or the privilege of serving your Sovereign and Country in that distinguished and arduous capacity.

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The Horse has for ages been a favourite theme with those who have had opportunities of knowing the noble animal.

Job's description of him is grandly poetical: he must have been fond of him, and observed and understood him, to write so powerfully.

For many years I have been abroad in a country, the nature and primitive state of which throws one in close companionship with his horse; where labour and accommodation are scarce and expensive; where the master is frequently on his horse from morning till night—has often to feed him, saddle him, tether him, and when on a journey to watch him; and if he does stray away, has to find him himself: so that he becomes attached to the animal, and intimately acquainted with his habits and disposition.

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I do not believe that he is naturally vicious : sometimes he becomes so from harsh and impatient treatment, when not understanding what is desired of him ; and from experience I fully credit the extraordinary tales of affection and attachment narrated of the Arabs and their steeds.

This, however, is not a treatise on the Horse, but a word in his praise, and a sketch of some of the scenes and characters which mingle in the pathway of his existence.

Those taken from nature have been witnessed by myself, or described to me by others who have witnessed them ; and where the frailties of our disposition are pointed at, the characters are general and not personal.

Where your Lordship's name is mentioned,

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either in the Park or the Crimean Charges, it is in all sincerity, and without any attempt at flattery or colouring, and the character is depicted as I believe it to be in the opinion of the general public, as well as my own.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient, humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

London, June 1865.

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FOOTPRINTS OF THE HORSE.

I.

BEAUTIFUL creature! intelligent steed!
Willing the voice or the bridle to heed;
Fond of your rider, if he's fond of you;
Bold, yet affectionate—sensitive, too;
Gentle with woman, undaunted with man,
A friend in his service, a slave for his gain.

II.

If pure in his blood, and high-bred his race,
Like the well-bred of men his position he'll grace;
Will not be restless nor fidget about
When company's moving, and many turn out.
With a high, quiet bearing, his course he'll pursue,
But when he is called on till death he will go.

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III.

All the world over this motto's known well,
"Be it women or horses 'tis blood that will tell:"
Like them, too, his after performance and fate,
Much depends on tuition in life's early state.
Experience has taught, that by kindness and care
The fiercest of mettle grows gentle and fair.

Advice.

IV.

IN training be patient—be fond—make a friend;
By sympathy, kindness, a friend will be gained.
The master himself should his horse help to break,
Would he know the close friendship the creature can make.
'Tis not pleasure so much in this climate of clouds,
As it is in the sunshine the bright South affords.

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V.

There I've fondled and been with my pet steed for hours,
And vanquished his fears by kind sympathy's powers,
When he's come almost wild from the wide-spreading plain,
Untutored to traffic, unaccustomed to man,
'Tis a beautiful sight to observe the shy doubt
The first time he's yarded and man steps about.

VI.

With nostril distended and eye shining bright,
The symmetry's charming—a beautiful sight!
The veins rise to view, and the nerves are alert;
Life moves in each muscle, in every part.
He snorts a defiance or plunges with fear,
His knotted mane waves with wild grace to the air.

VII.

Having dwelt in a land where the sunshine and air
Are glowingly beautiful, brilliantly clear;
Where the horse is a constant companion of man,
O'er the varying landscape and mountain-bound plain;
Being fond of all animals, mainly the horse,
I hope to induce a mild firmness for force.

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VIII.

His lessons he needs to be patiently taught,
Not flogged to, but kindly and carefully brought
To a sense of your wishes; he will soon understand
What it is you would teach, and obey your command.
To make an apt scholar you don't flog a boy,
Or you'd sadden the spirit and temper destroy.

IX.

Softly speak—meet his gaze—with a slow pace appear;
Whatever you do, excite no cause for fear.
If he moves, you stand still; by judgment and care
He will like you, and soon cease to tremble or fear.
Step by step he'll grow fond—his faith you'll soon gain;
He will carry—obey you—and move to the rein.

X.

Give a mouth which can regulate every step,
Which the smoothest of snaffles and light hands can check;
But do not be rough, or once break the soft skin,—
It will only heal up and be harder again:
For Rarey's instructions are wise, kind, and plain—
Let your own judgment be so, your treatment humane.

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XI.

The vices are caused by impatience when young,
By the folly of grooms, or by passions too strong;
'Tis tact and assurance the hot blood can tame,
And kindness may win it to service and gain.
Of animals noblest, enduring, good beast!
He is worthy a kind thought in each owner's breast.

His Description from Job.

XII.

HEAR him described by the virtuous Job,—
"Hast thou given him strength, or with thunder him clothed?
Like a grasshopping insect canst make him afraid?
In terror his nostrils are gloriously arrayed.
He paweth the valley, rejoicing in strength;
To meet with an army he'll go any length.

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XIII.

" He is not affrighted; he mocketh at fear,
And rages with fierceness if struck by a spear.
Should the trumpet give sound for a hasty retreat,
He's unwilling to turn or believe himself beat.
He snorts at the clarion, rejoicing afar
In the shouts of the Captains—the thunders of war."

The Author of his Beauty and Symmetry.

XIV.

MAN cannot give him the beauty he owns;
God gives the symmetry nature adorns:
God breathes the life to the simplest of flowers:
God formed the universe, fashioned all powers.
We praise Thee, adore Thee, feel the work of Thy love,
In the speed of the moment, the flight of the dove.

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XV.

In the whisper of conscience, in its constant appeals
To our errors, our passions, when nature rebels;
In the sea, in the air, in the flesh, in the ground,
With power majestic thy works are all crown'd.
There's no useless substance in nature's grand course,
From the ground which we tread on to a man or a horse.

Desirable Points in a Horse.

XVI.

IN a horse there are points which a good one should own,
Whilst neatness and symmetry his action should crown,—
Full in the eye, at the nostril spread wide;
Broad in the forehead, and deep in the side;
Short in the leg, in the bone clean and strong;
Springy the pastern—but mind, not too long;

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XVII.

Sloping the shoulder, yet wide in the chest;
Ample in girdle, and proud in the crest;
Of graceful appearance, though strong in each part;
Quiet in temper, and cheerful of heart;
A pleasure to look at—healthy and sound,
With action to keep his broad knees from the ground.

XVIII.

Should you own such as this, don't be tempted by price,
It's rarely one meets with a perfect horse twice:
Neither keep him too hot nor feed him too high—
When on service from home let his food meet your eye:
Do not grudge him attention, his well-deserved meed,
For your limbs and your life oft depend on your steed.

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The Charger.

XIX.

NOBLE in spirit, and fearless in war,
Facing the cannon, its thunder and roar,
Death spreads around him, but dauntlessly on
He rushes, nor shrinks from his duty to man:
See him collected as the loud trumpets sound,
Steadily gallop, then on foes with a bound.

XX.

Breath gleams from his nostril, and fire from his eyes;
Midst shouts from the soldiers still onwards he flies,
Full in the face of the death-howling gun:
Nor strives to turn back till his duty is done.
Red streams may trickle, and pain may distress,
But long as he's able the battle he'll press.

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The Hunter.

XXI.

IN the field by the covert, when the fox breaks away,
And the huntsman's "view halloo" enlivens the day;
When the tales that men tell, and the chats of the morn,
Are checked by the music of hound and of horn;
He enjoys, as his rider, the sport of the day,
And none who there see him this truth will gainsay.

XXII.

His heart leaps with pleasure, excitement, delight,
And he willingly uses his power and might:
Now cleverly leaping a ditch or a fence,
Now eagerly pulling to get in advance,
His ear, eye, and head, point direct to the hounds—
The attraction their joyous and musical sounds.

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Meet of the Hounds.

XXIII.

LET me give a slight sketch of a meet of the hounds:—
Suppose it to be in some gentleman's grounds,
The servants are ready with biscuit and beer,
And inside the house there is welcome and cheer;
The road-line is dotted with well-mounted steeds—
From every direction the meeting proceeds.

XXIV.

The Lady, the Squire, the Farmer, the Peer,
Are mingling together with cheerfulness here:
The costumes are various, the coats black or red—
Most men have hats; a few, caps on their head.
A carriage drives up with two ladies inside,
Having sent on before them the horses they'll ride.

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XXV.

The fair bloom of health and high-breeding adorns
Their looks, and their style like a choice flower charms ;
The county-men hope for a glance from their eye,
And bending, uncover, as they chance pass them by :
A few of their friends will advance for a chat—
They are only a few who claim freedom for that.

XXVI.

Their perfected hunters the servants now bring ;
They mount, and are seated with one easy spring :
By placing the foot in the hand of the groom
They settle themselves, and at once feel at home.
Of their beauty and presence the whole field is proud,
Their gentle demeanour's not lost on the crowd.

XXVII.

The Master has come and the meet's time is o'er—
Girths have been tightened—eleven's the hour.
Two hundred and upwards have assembled for sport,
The most noble of all to which man can resort :
It stimulates health and it elevates thought ;
To proudest and humblest it pleasure has brought.

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XXVIII.

Those inclined to be lazy it cheers from their bed,
And drives every vicious idea from th' head.
With a smile on his face, and a kind word for all,
The sportsman appears at the first breakfast call;
The beauties of nature e'en in winter abound,
And the heart is impressed with the wonders around.

XXIX.

I care not for words, for the tongue's a false rod,
But I'm sure a true sportsman must think of his God:
The lessons he gets as he's riding along
Are clearly instructive—impressively strong;
They speak with a voice much more powerful than breath,
They point to Creation—to Life—and to Death.

XXX.

There's the glorious sun which the landscape adorns,
The frost on the meadows, the dew on the thorns;
The birds with their plumage for the season more thick,
And the numerous berries on tree, shrub, and quick:
The rabbits are fat and as warm as needs be—
Who clothes them? who feeds them? the conscience must see.

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XXXI.

There's the tree now all leafless, apparently dead,
Which we know in the spring will be greenly arrayed;
There's the dirty ploughed land looking barren and waste,
Which in few months of time will with plenty be graced;
There are sheep covered warmly with natural wool;
The bee-hives with honey and bee life are full.

XXXII.

The cuckoo's not heard, and the swallow is gone,
And musical birds have abandoned their song,—
Such sights and such thoughts are continually before
The sportsman — he cannot his Maker ignore.
Place the man amidst cities, their pleasures and ways,
Which life do you think will the best feelings raise?

XXXIII.

Some say hunting's cruel — how unjust is the cry!
They censure who live upon flesh — it must die.
A mischievous fox has a chance for his life,
But the innocent sheep cannot move from the knife:
So those who think killing an animal cruel
Should live upon bread-stuff, potatoes, and gruel.

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XXXIV.

At least one in three of those hunted survive ;
Those killed have less pain than most other deaths give :
A shot from a gun often wounds a poor hare,
And she screams like a baby if people go near ;
A plunge in a lamb from a butcher's cold knife
Is ten times more agony than racing for life.

XXXV.

The time being up now, the huntsman moves on
With the hounds, and behind him the happy field throng ;
A mile or so brings them to some well-known wood—
The hounds are put in, and loud noise is subdued ;
The whips take position to view him away
When the fox finds the cover too hot for his stay.

XXXVI.

The sportsmen sit quietly waiting to hear
The old hounds give tongue, and the huntsman a cheer.
Hark ! that's " Rocket," a sure and a faithful old hound ;
The horn sweetly echoes—the fox has been found.
In a minute or two the whole pack are laid on,
The fox breaks away as they loudly give tongue.

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XXXVII.

That musical, joyous, exciting, clear sound,
Makes the spirits of riders and horses rebound.
At the edge of the wood cries a voice, "He's away!"
And every sportsman's soon riding that way.
Some go for the gaps, some rush for the gate,
Those well-mounted ladies ride fearless and straight.

XXXVIII.

Gently! steady his pace—sit firm—and you 'll be,
In a very few minutes, where the run you may see.
Steady him over the heavy ploughed land;
At his jumps use discretion, and not too much hand;
Ride for the hunt and not for first place—
Remember, in hunting you don't ride to race.

XXXIX.

Out the wood—over fences—through grass-field and plough,
The hounds and the horsemen continue to flow.
The riding is varied with little mishaps,
Such as getting in ditches, or falling of caps.
With three miles' hard riding they come to a check,
And the hounds cast about for the scent of the track.

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XL.

After ten minutes working they find it again,
And away go the pack in the merriest train;
The stragglers have time just to see the fresh start,
But might very soon as well be in the dark:
For on the hounds rattle for nearly an hour,
With noses to ground, as their tongues music pour.

XLI.

They near a big wood, for which Reynard had come;
There lose him: sport's ended, and all return home.
They've enjoyed a good gallop, the company, the day,
Their nerves are braced up, and all care is away;
With appetite sharpened in home they delight,
Tell what has been talked of, and re-ride their flight.

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Cattle Mustering Abroad.

XLII.

ABROAD where his master has cattle in herds,
On plains without hedges, and hills without roads,
Where millions of acres of open and bush,
Where streams clear as crystal, where mountain and rush,
Are wandered among and enjoyed by the beast,
And man rarely travels to startle their peace ;

XLIII.

Where the bull and the heifer, and calf but half grown,
Think man an intruder in this their wild home,
Here nature's true wildness their fierce looks imply,
For at him they'll venture, or from him they'll fly :
The horse used to muster, by practice made fit,
Performs this hard duty, scarce needing the bit.

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XLIV.

Like the dog he will share in the stock-hunting chase,
And turn in an instant whilst going full pace,
Should the animal turn, or will give him a grip
With his teeth, if he cannot his running outstrip.
These cattle half wild for a short way can race,
And side with the fleetest of horse's full pace.

XLV.

Up mountains, down steeps, through rivers, whose beds
Are rocks and huge boulders, the beast rashly threads.
Should he get to the woods, you may leave him behind,
As he will not come out unless he's inclined.
A rider must be like a part of his horse
To sit the sharp turnings, and ride such a course.

XLVI.

Like the wind the horse flies, should a beast break away
From the drove, and he'll turn him or bring him to bay ;
Whilst the rider, the stockman, wields the merciless whip :
Like a pistol it sounds when 'tis cracked with a flip.
He gallops him back, sharply plying the thong,
And racing beside him he makes the blood come.

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XLVII.

Should it venture to charge, firmly stands the trained
horse,
Till just the right moment—he wheels—shuns his course.
The stockwhip's lead-end strikes the closed-eyed beast
down
If the rider's expert whom he rushes upon;
Or, missing his stroke, he can flog at his tail,
Till the bellowing brute fears again to assail.

In the Meadow.

XLVIII.

OF the sights which a horse in his lifetime has seen
He shall tell his own tale: so let him begin.—
When a foal in the meadows, my mother with me,
Was turned out to exercise, graze, and be free;
How anxious she was if I gambolled and played,
Or went any distance away from her side!

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XLIX.

I would stretch in the sunshine, stand still, start and tear,
As hard as I could in a circle—then rear;
And without any warning I'd race round and fling,
Then back, rear and plunge, like a wild or mad thing.
'Twas only the spirit, the excitement of youth,
Which nature implanted and calmed with my growth.

L.

I've watched the grey rabbit go bobbing along,
Now stopping to listen, fearing something was wrong;
Then nibbling away at the tender green grass,
Now rising, and rubbing his face as I pass.
A sudden surprise makes him scamper and fly,
As the white of his tail is exposed to the eye.

LI.

I have seen the smooth mouse running close by my feet,
Less caring for me than for something to eat;
I've seen the brown weasel come slinking around,
And the mouse hunted by it, as fox by the hound;
I've heard, when their eyes met, a terror-struck scream—
The fright brings paralysis, the mouse seems to dream.

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LII.

I have seen the hare hunted in nature's same way,
And heard like a baby her scream and her cry,
As she yielded herself to the weasel or stoat,
Without using her speed to avoid the pursuit;
But round and around in small circle she'd hop,
Then give herself up with a scream as she'd stop.

LIII.

I have seen a bird crouch—heard it utter a cry,
Ere the hawk above touched it, unless with its eye;
I've seen the gay starling, the sparrow and rook,
And all sorts of birds, do things not in a book;
And were I to tell them you would doubt the real truth,
Or think they were written for folly and youth.

LIV.

I've seen the maid milking close under the hedge;
John came, by mere chance you may hear him allege,
To know if myself and my mother were right:
The man kissed the maid, nor asked if he might.
The milk has been spilled, but no tale of the kiss
Was ever acknowledged for losses like this.

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LV.

My innocent self was the culprit of course,
But I'm sure she'd not sit for the kiss of a horse.
The hedge shelters us from the cold of the night,
And also shuts out the great house from the sight.
Others besides them have wandered this way,
" By the merest of chances" if they are asked why.

LVI.

Young ladies have wooers as well as milk-maids,
And sometimes incline to the foliage and shades:
If they are not so easily touched on the face,
They know for a flirt the most suitable place.
Like the pair with the milk, should their lost time be asked,
They are perfectly ignorant how it has passed.

LVII.

I have known silly children roll a hoop or stones throw,
On purpose to teaze me and see how I'd go.
My mother, in anger, has snorted and stared
At the cowardly children, who, easily scared,
Run with tales about vice to their parents and homes,
Forgetting to mention the hoops and the stones.

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LVIII.

I have seen the poor beggars pass hungry and cold,
In nothing but rags, dirty, scanty, and old,
With keen-seeking eyes and visage distressed,
With sickness at heart, and with grief at the breast;
A family uncertain of the next bit of bread,
In sheer destitution they wander, chance-led.

LIX.

" An envious look they directed this way,
A look full of meaning—as much as to say,
I wish we belonged to the animal horse,
Were coated by nature, on grass fed and gorse,
For happy and healthy, contented and warm,
Are those in the meadow, whilst we are forlorn."

LX.

Ah, no! thought the mother, by cheering hope caught
(She had not the language to express the bright thought),
For our sufferings here may a future atone,
When we may be happier than queens on their throne.
The life which we are passing is only the road
To a glorious eternity—a dwelling with God.

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LXI.

Dear readers! the fiercest of savages still
The truths of life's future instinctively feel;
So be not amazed that I've pictured a hope
In the heart of a beggar, for silence may cloak
The mightiest emotions, the happiest bliss,
The acutest of anguish, the greatest distress.

LXII.

I've seen the false smiles of the dressy and smart,
With poverty haunting their purse and their heart,
Hard fight with the world, painful folly to ape,
An appearance at variance with pocket to shape;
A high class of begging, of shuffling appeals,
And all the world sees they are out at the heels.

LXIII.

I've seen the hale rustic go plodding along,
Cheerful to work, as he whistled a song:
His is the life where the troubles are few,
Where health is maintained by the sweat of the brow;
Without fashion to tempt, and no falseness or pride,
They live on the land where their forefathers died.

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The Race-course.

LXIV.

BE pleased to consider a few years gone by.
Behold me just saddled to race—aye, to fly.
The jockeys are mounted—my comrades advance,
Some steady enough, some with eagerness prance;
For we know what it is we are called on to do,
And are willing and anxious and eager to go.

LXV.

I see, by the multitude eyeing me most,
That I am the favourite, of my stable the boast.
Now we are ready—the last bell has rung—
The cry is, "They're off!" and the race has begun.
A few minutes only, I'm beat on the post—
Enormous the total of money that's lost!

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LXVI.

O see what sad looks, what contortions of face,
Are mingling the crowd, and their nature disgrace!
With burning remorse and with half-maddened brain
The gamblers, like demons, return home again.
To their families and children they are cruel and cross,
Oft embittering life by an imprudent loss.

LXVII.

My owner—a clever, experienced one—
Withdraws me from racing, so nearly I won;
It is better, he said, I should run with the ruck,
Than come in a second, for that brings ill-luck.
The reason is this, that a second leads in
To fruitless expenses and hoping to win.

LXVIII.

And the horse which stands second in his first public race
Can rarely be found in a future first place;
For we know, if his running were honest and true,
That to win he did all he could possibly do:
Whilst an outsider might not be pushed or distressed,
And no one would know what he'd do at his best.

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Hyde Park and Rotten Row.

LXIX.

MY next observation is the famed Park of Hyde,
Where the old aristocracy leisurely ride.
The height of the season in London is May,
When no other spot in the world can display
Such a phalanx of beauty; rank and riches are seen,
From ladies and squires to the Prince or the Queen.

LXX.

Here daily parade, for their pleasure and health,
The highest of fashion, of rank, and of wealth,
Some riding, some driving, some walking along:
In no other kingdom is such brilliant throng
Of living celebrities, world-wide-known men,
The movers of empires by words or by pen.

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LXXI.

The costly turns-out of the great of the land;
The beautiful horses, the bloods four-in-hand;
With liv'ried outriders of nobles and dukes;
The handsomest women in happiest looks;
The princely magnificence—an assembly so grand
Astounds the observer of every land.

LXXII.

That plainly-dressed, quiet old man, is a peer,
With an income of some hundred thousands a-year.
Great Britain's high standing is firmly maintained
By noblemen, owners of mansions and land;
Whose estates in a splendid dependency shine,
Aristocracy keeping ancestral line.

LXXIII.

The smart man who just now is scampering by,
Curvetting his horse to attract every eye,
Is a nobody—most likely deeply in debt,
Accomplished in swagger and given to bet.
His career is a short one—before very long
Retrospection alone will review him this throng.

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LXXIV.

That lady's a Countess—the Countess of Blank;
And all those three ladies are ladies of rank.
Look at her on the chestnut, how graceful and well
She rides that magnificent horse, whose eyes swell
With excitement and spirit, so fresh he would start
Ungovernable, ungoverned by any faint heart!

LXXV.

Yet she sits with soft smile, and with delicate hand,
Her body erect, she still holds her command.
Though he plunges and strives hard to gallop away,
With her reins well held down, without martingale's stay,
She sits him, and wins him to sober and calm,
More by nerve and by patience than strength of her arm.

LXXVI.

Her horse has been too highly feeding of late,
Want of exercise causes his half-maddened state.
Still, perhaps, she delights to have something to do,
As his mettle bursts forth and his wide nostrils blow,
Or exults in the pleasure enjoyed throughout life,
Of coming a victor from contest or strife.

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LXXVII.

See that noble, that graceful, yet fierce-looking Earl!
On his brow sits authority, and his stern eye can hurl
A soldier's defiance. Upright as a dart,
Lord Cardigan rides as himself were a part
Of his horse; not all Europe a better can show,
As a charger in war or a steed in the Row.

LXXVIII.

Right proud he may be of so handsome a horse,
One who's carried him often in all kinds of course—
In battle, with horror and death storming round;
In peace, with its beauty and happiness crowned.
A white-heeled light chestnut is "Ronald," whose fame
Midst the noted of horses is worthy a name.

LXXIX.

I say that the Earl can look "fiercely" and "stern;"
He looks like a soldier, like a soldier looks firm:
That his heart is as warm as his spirit is bold,
There are those who have known him and fervently told.
The face which is stamped with decision and nerve,
Portrays the high spirit a chieftain should have.

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LXXX.

The fair-featured boy on his pony, dark-brown,
A pony he dearly loves, "Charley" his own,
Is a nobleman's son, and a fine open lad,
With bonny blue eyes and a beautiful head;
To him 'tis life's spring-time, and Hope's brilliant wings
Depict a bright future of glorious things.

LXXXI.

The clock points to nearly the hour of five—
Now enter the Prince and Princess for a drive;
The crowd that await them near Apsley House gate
Are courteously bowing, their presence to greet.
With a bow, too, their Highnesses graciously bend,
As they quickly drive on and amidst the crowd blend.

LXXXII.

As sweet-scented blossoms a fragrance diffuse,
So Royalty's rays mark the pathway it goes;
And the multitude, eagerly seeking the sight,
Absorb it with pleasure, and tell with delight,
To their friends and home circle, their fortunate glance
On Denmark's fair daughter and Britain's true Prince.

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LXXXIII.

The people are proud of the handsome Princess,
Of her beautiful forehead—intelligent face,
Of her gentle demeanour and brightness of eye—
No sweeter expression e'er awoke lover's sigh.
Great Britain uplifts her homage to bless
Her Queen, Wales's Prince, and his Royal Princess.

LXXXIV.

That carriage and harness bedizened with gold,
With a stolen escutcheon for the world to behold,
Is the lust of a man who is rich in his wealth,
But anything else, except rich in himself;
He had better by half have been quiet and neat,
By worthy, good actions, his monstrous luck greet.

LXXXV.

Search the cells of his brain for the past of his course,
Know truly his conscience, his sharp tricks—nay, worse,
Read through his companions, there are few who will class
But with gamblers or fawners, scarce to fashion they pass;
For none but the vulgar think riches can make
Acquaintance desirable, or fawn for its sake.

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LXXXVI.

There's another description of fashion to trace,
In the woman who's leading a dashing disgrace,
Who trades on her beauty, that gift thought divine,
And wrecks all her virtue at Vanity's shrine;
Like flowers without fragrance they're coloured the most,
Like the tares in the wheatfield they perish at last.

LXXXVII.

There are some such gay women in costly array,
On fools without feeling and spendthrifts they prey;
That such folly and madness should be—such excess,
Is beyond comprehension. A wife will spend less;
A kind, sweet companion she is, any hour
Comprised in the circuit of twenty-and-four.

LXXXVIII.

Is it not that young ladies take too long to wed?
And that men have not patience so long to be staid?
For, be it remembered, there are those who would court,
Passionate of temperament, sanguine of thought,
Accustomed to unrestrained bachelors' life,
But who dread the long task-work of getting a wife.

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LXXXIX.

By being long staid, and by taskwork, I mean
The formal assumption and staidness of mien;
The taskwork of having to win the assent
Of others besides the dear object they want:
This striving to please whom they do not revere
Is a difficult task for some men to endure.

XC.

There are many men seared by refusal's sad blast,
By ladies pretending they 'd have them if asked;
They gain a proposal ere they know what they mean,
Then on others' advice in the matter they lean:
They are not strong-minded, on themselves won't rely,
So the true love's rejected with courteous reply.

XCI.

Not by letters or words is a woman's court paid—
By the eye, by the hand, is the secret conveyed;
Thousands of men are made reckless by such,
And recoil with aversion from Love's sacred touch:
Experience warns them, with withering hand,
That woman is sometimes unstable as sand.

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XCII.

Like a plant on which grafting's attempted but failed,
Is the heart disappointed, though its wound be concealed;
And a quiet staid creature who thus plays the jilt
Does far greater mischief—the pang's keener felt—
Than one who is openly known as a flirt:
Indecision in her may not do so much hurt.

XCIII.

Faithful woman's angelic, a creature sublime,
In duty devoted, in thought she 's divine;
In love, like warm sunshine, she gladdens the heart,
And brightens man's life in its every part:
But when she mistrusts she 's unsafe as a reed,
And sensitive men at her wavering shrine bleed.

XCIV.

Whoever would wed have a mission to do,
Needing confidence, firmness, self-sacrifice too;
With the passions of each they will have to contend,
To guide them aright should their good spirit tend.
'Tis a glorious achievement when a man's mind is brought,
By Love's holy influence, to heavenly thought.

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XCV.

When two people love, if their love is sincere,
'Tis the spirit, the mind, which the loved ones revere;
Grace and beauty no doubt attract many an eye,
But that's not the love which on time can rely.
Then weigh not too much what the world's tongue will say
Give your judgment and feeling an honest fair-play.

XCVI.

They may love through this world, guided on to the next,
Or part disunited with consciences vexed,
'Tis a perilous risk which is ventured upon.
For this I would point to the spirit of man:
His appearance, his riches, are nothing compared
With congenial feeling for home-life prepared.

XCVII.

See! there rides a man, and beside him his son,
The same blood in both does its red courses run;
Yet its magnetic sway is repellent to each
Affinity kindling firm love or wide breach;
Instead of a friend the offspring prepares
For an enemy wherever the father appears.

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XCVIII.

Restless and watching the eye of the sire,
Peering, inquisitive, exacting its fire;
Restrained and unnatural the air of the son,
Like a mouse which the cat has her dreaded eye on;
That his soul is imprisoned is seen at a glance—
They are Baron and son from the fair clime of France.

XCIX.

That couple have transferred their love into strife,
And affection is stifled 'tween husband and wife;
There envy uprises at every turn,
And constant suspicion with fury will burn.
A fair face to the world's ostentatiously shown,
But the world's not deceived—the passion is known.

C.

An intuitive sense, like an angel on guard,
Seems to whisper the conscience when danger's abroad;
It needs no loud voice, it requires no strained tongue,
To point to the injured how a mischief is done:
Insignificant acts will expose the true soul—
By the bearing of one we can read through the whole.

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CI.

The voice can't reply where the spirit is crushed,
By fear and tuition it is silent and hushed;
But the depths of the heart nurse a passion far worse,
A bitter contempt long outlives a quick curse;
If ghosts or bad spirits appear after death
May they not be those passions un-vented in breath?

CII.

Though parted by distance, by seas or by wind,
They haunt the oppressor, they rise on the mind;
And the stolid fixed looks which the tyrannized wear,
The passionless eye and its meaningless stare,
Its unsounded language, again and again,
In darkness—in death—shall torment the flush'd brain.

CIII.

Oh! earnestly, frankly, let each one avow,
That their hearts have been erring, though no matter how,
And both be less eager their wrongs to perceive;
Let them bury the past and begin a new leaf.
The mind that's too proud to let trifles affect
Enjoys most of liberty, and gains most respect.

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CIV.

Turn aside to the throng who are pacing the walk,
Admiring the riders and eager in talk;
They come from the square, from the great house and small.
Some have titles and riches, and some none at all.
An experienced eye can in most cases trace
Their position in life from their style and their face.

CV.

There is a lady with daughter and dower,
Looking frightened at men who approach with a flower;
And there is another with four pretty girls,
Two with hair floating loosely, and two with long curls,
For ever her hope is to get them off hand,
But, somehow or other, men won't understand.

CVI.

There is a lawyer, hard-worked and well-fee'd,
He tries to do calmness, but cannot succeed;
His mind's all excitement from papers and pen,
Which he cannot at once disengage from his brain:
He has come from his office this way to his home,
Feeling heartily thankful his duty is done.

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CVII.

That's a fat rustic just run up to town
On a few little errands—one, to get a new gown
For his smart-dressing wife, who has friends living near,
And think to give pleasure by bringing him here:
The mistake is apparent by his evident pain,
And his awkward unfitness for this polished train.

CVIII.

He is happier far with his parish compeers,
Discussing his turnips, his pigs, and his steers;
Feeling grand as a guardian, suspicious and loud,
Detesting the clergy because they are proud.
A nature that's rough, without delicate mind,
Can never as equal consort with refined.

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India.

CIX.

FAREWELL to the Park, where 'tis no selfish boast
To doubt which attracts admiration the most—
The fine handsome women or beautiful steed,
The highest positions, the purest of breed.
Accompany me now to India's parched shore,
Where I go as a charger—am trained to the war.

CX.

Like a change come o'er nature is life in the East,
To all from afar, whether mankind or beast;
No rich verdant meadows bespangle the land,
No high-standing rye-grass to mow close at hand:
The grass-cutter's time is entirely bestowed
In gathering each day for one horse the dry food.

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CXI.

Not with scythe-blade he mows, not with sickle he reaps,
But rakes up the grass by the roots into heaps.
At many miles distant he scratches the ground
Ere he gathers sufficient of grass from the land;
So that horses out here need two servants a-piece—
The one to get grass, and a groom called a "syce."

CXII.

I have bounded with pleasure whilst marching to war—
The accoutrements glittering all bright as a star,
As the beams of the sun on the polished arms play,
And martial bands spirit Reflection away;
Music lightens each footstep and cheers every breast,
With a charm which assists men to march when distressed.

CXIII.

The music and sun mock the storm and the fight,
The wounded ones' groans, and their fast-fading sight;
Like the beautiful brightness which sparkles the eyes,
And plays o'er the face ere an invalid dies.
It proves that in happiest moments we should,
As in suffering and sorrow, have a hold upon God.

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CXIV.

I often have travelled ere break of the day—
All silent around, not a word cheers the way—
Till the sight of the rebels to thought gives new form,
And ushers brisk action and war's bloody storm.
Ah! many a scene, far too dreadful to note,
Is enacted . . . Hark! hark! that is victory's shout!

CXV.

I have heard the deep groans of the bleeding and dying,
The moaning which mingles with fainting and sighing;
I have seen the fixed gaze just before they expire,
So distant of thought yet so full of desire,
Expressive of "O how I wish, how I wish,
Some fond one was here just to give me a kiss!"*

* When dying, Lord Nelson asked Captain Hardy to kiss him.

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A Rebel shot from a Gun.

CXVI.

A REBEL's marched out to be blown from a gun—
A mild retribution for what he has done:
He coolly advances, nor by feature or breath
Does he show that he fears thus to meet his just death;
But how resolution with terror may vie
Is known to his Maker, not exposed to the eye.

CXVII.

Now strapped to the cannon, and there firmly braced,
The mouth of which covers his middle and waist,
The signal is given—loud thunders the air,
The spirit of man is departed—ah, where?
Does it traverse the realms of its future abode,
Or flit for a time near this ponderous globe?

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CXVIII.

His body is not, as you'd think, dashed away,
And hurled in the air all in atoms and spray.
'Tis only its centre the force thus destroys;
Whilst head, arms, and legs, like automaton toys,
Instantaneously drop at the mouth of the gun,
And life takes its flight ere the thunder has done.*

CXIX.

These fatalists meet, with heart calmly sedate,
As predestination whatever their fate.
Our troops feel no pity in shooting them down—
The thoughts of Cawnpore bend their brows with a frown,
And fiery Revenge pants in every vein
Of the soldier who knows how his sisters were slain.

* I am indebted to Captain W. D. Couchman, R.A., for this description.

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New-Comers.

CXX.

THE officers' chat would you have me repeat?
The quizzing that all the new-comers must meet?
The "griffins" and "spins," more especially the girls,
From the shape of the foot to the twist of their curls?
"This one is too fat," and "that one's too thin;"
"That one's very well if she's got any tin."

CXXI.

Here's another, a beauty—an angel—a saint:
Good heavens! why say it? and wherefore the taint?
Her grandfather once was in business or trade!
So the soldier permits the fair woman to fade.
Oh, wretched injustice! oh, cowardly fear!
Why on earth need you now for her forefathers care?

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Bucephalus.

CXXII.

OF all the famed horses which history's page
Hands down from the past to a yet unborn age,
Alexander's Bucephalus claims the first place,
For intelligence, courage, for strength, and for grace;
His price, too, unequalled, almost fabulous sounds,
Representing about thirty thousands of pounds.

CXXIII.

None else but his master he'd suffer to ride,
Only him would he carry with safety and pride;
Kneeling down when he wanted to mount to his back,
His instinct scarce showing of reason the lack.
Only once did he turn from the heat of the fray,
Only once did he fail his command to obey.

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CXXIV.

That once added honour to those he had won,
For he did so to save his lord's life—not his own.
At the battle Hydaspes, when mortally hit,
He retreated, pain-maddened—unfelt was the bit.
He carried his Emperor till danger was past,
Kneeled down in the rear rank and then breathed his last.

CXXV.

In the Punjaub of India his bones lie entombed:
There many a shot o'er his grave has since boomed;
There the Sikh and the Sepoy have mingled their blood,
And the British heroic encounters withstood;
There the leopard and tiger like thunder have roared,
And the jackals and wolves nightly rounds have explored.

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Black Bess.

CXXVI.

LONG years may roll by ere a kingdom possess
Another such beauty as Turpin's Black Bess.
So enduring—so perfect—so handsome to eye;
Like the lamb she was gentle, like the wild deer could fly.
I cannot myself give description so good
As the following, ta'en from Ainsworth's "Rookwood."*

"BLACK BESS.

"Let the lover his mistress's beauty rehearse,
And laud her attractions in languishing verse;
Be it mine in rude strains, but with *truth*, to express
The love that I bear to my bonny Black Bess.

* I am indebted to the politeness of Harrison Ainsworth for permission to insert this song.

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" From the West was her dam, from the East was her sire;
From the one came her swiftness, the other her fire:
No peer of the realm better blood can possess
Than flows in the veins of my bonny Black Bess.

" Look! look! how that eyeball glows bright as a brand!
That neck proudly arches! those nostrils expand!
Mark that wide-flowing mane! of which each silky tress
Might adorn prouder beauties—though none like Black Bess.

" Mark that skin sleek as velvet, and dusky as night,
With its jet undisfigured by one lock of white;
That throat branched with veins, prompt to charge or caress:
Now is she not beautiful?—bonny Black Bess!

" Over highway and by-way, in rough and smooth weather,
Some thousands of miles have we journeyed together;
Our couch the same straw, and our meal the same mess:
No couple more constant than I and Black Bess!

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"By moonlight, in darkness, by night or by day,
Her headlong career there is nothing can stay;
She cares not for distance, she knows not distress:
Can you show me a courser to match with Black Bess?

"Once it happened in Cheshire, near Dunham, I popped
On a horseman alone, whom I suddenly stopped;
That I lightened his pockets you'll readily guess—
Quick work makes Dick Turpin when mounted on Bess.

"Now it seems the man knew me: 'Dick Turpin,' said he,
'You shall swing for this job, as you live, d'ye see:'
I laughed at his threats and his vows of redress;
I was sure of an *alibi* then with Black Bess.

"The road was an hollow, a sunken ravine,*
Overshadowed completely by wood like a screen;
I clambered the bank, and I needs must confess
That one touch of the spur grazed the side of Black Bess.

* "The exact spot where Turpin committed this robbery, which has often been pointed out to us, lies in what is now a woody hollow, though once the old road from Altrincham to Knutsford, skirting the rich and sylvan domains of Dunham, and descending the hill

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"Brake, brook, meadow, and plough'd field, Bess fleetly bestrode,
As the crow wings her flight we selected our road;
We arrived at Hough Green in five minutes or less—
My neck it was saved by the speed of Black Bess.

"Stepping carelessly forward, I lounge on the Green,
Taking excellent care that by all I am seen;
Some remarks on time's flight to the squires I address,
But I say not a word of the flight of Black Bess.

"I mention the hour—it was just about four—
Play a rubber at bowls—think the danger is o'er;
When athwart my next game, like a checkmate at chess,
Comes the horseman in search of the rider of Bess.

that brings you to the bridge crossing the little river Bollin. With some difficulty we penetrated this ravine. It is just the place for an adventure of the kind. A small brook wells through it; and the steep banks are overhung with timber, and were, when we last visited the place (in April, 1834), a perfect nest of primroses and wild flowers. Hough (pronounced Hoo) Green lies about three miles across the country—the way Turpin rode. The old Bowling-green is one of the pleasantest inns in Cheshire."

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"What matter details? Off with triumph I came;
He swears to the hour, and the squires swear the same;
I had robbed him at *four!*—while at four *they* profess
I was quietly bowling—all thanks to Black Bess!

"Then one halloo, boys, one cheering halloo!
To the swiftest of coursers, the gallant, the true!
For the sportsman unborn shall the memory bless
Of the horse of the highwayman—bonny Black Bess!"

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Turpin's Ride to York,

In Dec. 1737.

CXXVII.

BUT of all the achievements of sport or of work,
None equal the journey of Black Bess to York;
At a distance of two hundred good English miles,
The season midwinter, when the moon coldly smiles,
From the "Falstaff" at Kilburn, at set of the sun,
Pursued by three troopers, all night she must run.

CXXVIII.

In splendid condition she was for the flight,
Her eye sparkling brightly, her coat shining bright;
High courage, high mettle, great vigour, great strength,
Combined to support her in race of such length.
York's city she sighted at the next peep of dawn,
The Minster chimed "six" as she died on that morn.

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CXXIX.

She seems to have known that Dick Turpin had need,
That night, of her best understanding and speed;
Gave a neigh when her listening and sensitive ear
Caught the echo of galloping borne on the air,
And centered her energies to widen the chase,
Requiring no spur-touch to hasten the pace.

CXXX.

With a start gained of three hundred bow-shafts or so
She steadily gallops, whilst others pursue,
And keeps to the utmost the pace of each steed,
Who, panting, in vain strive her course to exceed.
"Look out!" "Stop Dick Turpin!" such shouts rend the air;
Still Bess kept a-head, scarcely turning a hair.

CXXXI.

At Hornsey, the toll-keeper fancied he heard
In his own pockets rattle the golden reward
Which the Government offered, and certainly thought
That the highwayman would at his toll-bar be caught;
For, seeing folks riding at furious rate,
He recognised Turpin and shut to the gate.

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CXXXII.

Here rider and mare, gathering strength for the feat,
In an instant determine this barrier to leap;
Both feel the great danger: Dick knew that to pause
Was a sure way to die by his country's just laws.
Like the wild deer in swiftness, like the tiger in eye,
Together they rise—safely over they fly.

CXXXIII.

The tollman looked on, all dumbfounded and lost,
As if he had witnessed the pass of a ghost;
And the threats of the constables tearing behind,
Unheeded by him, float away on the wind,
Till they give him a crown-piece his gate back to sway,
And recall his senses without more delay.

CXXXIV.

Soon Dick breathed his mare whilst he tranquilly yet
Caressed her, and called her his beautiful pet,
Struck a light for his pipe, as still sailing along,
He cheers her, and spirits himself with a song:
But he cannot afford to lose time on the road,
"With hawks on the wing there is danger abroad."

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CXXXV.

" We must not be idle, my beauty, my best,
Your pulling assures me we dare not yet rest ;
You can hear the pursuers are following behind,
And I feel you are anxious to go like the wind.
Gently ! gently ! my beauty, this rate will outstrip
Any body of horsemen, use they spur, ply they whip.

CXXXVI.

" And if they're in earnest and keep up the course,
You and I, my sweet girl, must our energies nurse ;
Easy on hill-sides, on the turf race away,
Discretion and judgment may hold them at bay.
They can mount on fresh horses at every inn,
Whilst you, my own Bess, single-handed must win."

CXXXVII.

Through Tottenham she goes, like a quiver-shot dart,
Leaping easily over a donkey and cart ;
As they enter the village the villagers hiss,
But loudly hurra at the leap of Black Bess.
On, on, they still gallop—on, on, they still press,
Her high breed and courage will own no distress.

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CXXXVIII.

O'er rough ground and smooth ground, through valley and dell,
Her rider's excitement the mare shared as well;
Up steep hill, down steep hill, through country uneven.
St. Mary's at Huntingdon chimes forth eleven
As she clatters along in the now empty street—
The most of the people are warmly asleep.

CXXXIX.

Two or three, perhaps, hear the fierce rush of a horse,
Drop asleep, dream of ghosts in the whirlwind, or worse;
The season's too cold for a turn-out at night,
So wisely the warm ones imagine the sight:
Sixty miles of the journey's performed in four hours—
Though she flags not, it surely must lessen her powers.

CXL.

She still springs along with a beautiful ease,
Goes smooth as a zephyr and swift as a breeze;
To ride such an animal quickens the blood,
Exhilarates nature to most pleasing mood.
Dick Turpin felt this, and a fondness and pride
For his bonny Black Bess—aye, as were she his bride.

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CXLI.

The last twenty miles had been furiously run—
Too furious for such pace to last very long;
And up to this time it was only at Ware.
Dick Turpin a minute refreshed with his mare,
By sharing together a tankard of ale,
Then raced on again, with pursuit at her tail.

CXLII.

Now Lincolnshire's vapours and damp fogs approach,
Emerging from which, lo! they meet the York coach.
The coachman and guard fear the daring Turpin—
So, too, do the passengers, outside and in;
And though he would willingly unnoticed pass,
The road is stopped up with horses across.

CXLIII.

Dick lashes the horses to clear him a road
To rush by, and thus the coach danger elude:
Report says a shot was discharged through his hat,
But onwards he gallops, not caring for that.
When the passengers inside breathe freely again,
They thank God that Turpin's no prisoner with them.

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CXLIV.

Northamptonshire's bounds Bess's fleet heels soon pressed.
Eighty miles being done, 'twas indeed time to rest.
At a small wayside-inn a brief respite he takes;
In the dead of the night he the stable-boy wakes
With his recognised signal, and ventures to ask
The boy to make haste, and his presence to mask.

CXLV.

To refresh poor Black Bess, now all foaming with sweat,
Who still shows high mettle — must race further yet,
A bucket of brandy and water they mix,
And a raw, red beef-steak round her bit they affix;
With the brandy they sponge her, to cool and refresh,
To stimulate nature, to keep off distress.

CXLVI.

Nutrition she sucks from the raw piece of steak,
It not being prudent a corn meal to make;
She champs the fleshed bit and she paws the cold ground,
She pricks up her sensitive ears to a sound,
And signals alarm by a gently-breathed neigh—
Fly! fly! fly! Dick Turpin! for your life fly away!

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CXLVII.

For flying, however, 'twas now just too late,
So he rode to the stable, averting his fate :
The horsemen by changes had chased him thus near,
And saw him rush in with his beautiful mare.
At the back of the stable was a slope like a wall,
A thousand to one to go down was to fall.

CXLVIII.

But before the front door of the stable they force,
'Midst the constables' thundering with foot and cries hoarse,
Before it flew back to their violence and blow,
Black Bess was fast skimming the meadows below.
A brief consultation was instantly called,
As to whether 'twas time this fierce chase to withhold.

CXLIX.

One was anxious enough that the riding should end,
But the others o'erruling cried, "On like the wind!"
The stimulants wisely applied to Black Bess
Made her spirits exuberant, her running no less;
And Turpin had nothing to do but to steer,
As she rattled away by the moonlight so clear.

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CL.

But the hardest endurance must give way at last,
And the beautiful Bess time and pace must exhaust;
At Selby she seemed to be thoroughly done,
The marvel was only she'd lasted so long.
For fame of his steed o'er futurity's tide
Prompted Turpin's escape by this wonderful ride.

CLI.

An hour before this, Dick Turpin had known
Her life was in danger—yet so was his own.
He cared less for that than for founding her fame—
He has done it, and history will echo her name.
Regret still we must that his own claims no praise,
That a gibbet deservedly ended his days.

CLII.

With eyes blindly staring, with flank heaving fast,
With staggering gait, and with death on her cast,
She fell—she expired—just as York she had gained.
Turpin kissed her and wept—who weeps not such a friend?
A loss to her country was such a brave mare,
Not a thousand proud horses can this loss repair.

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Crimean Charges at Balaklava.

OCTOBER 25, 1854.

CLIII.

THE day-spring rose fair on the land of the Turk,
But its brightness was chequered by War's bloody work—
By the smoke of the cannon, by the shot's hissing breath,
By the groans of the warrior, by the struggles of death,
In thy mountain-clad valley, Balaklava, whose name,
Shall for ever the mightiest of courage proclaim.

CLIV.

Ere the light cheered the morn from the Tchernaya's pass,
The Russians moved troops up in numberless mass;
Like wave-swells advancing o'er billowy seas,
Which steadily roll undisturbed by the breeze—
Like the same silent billows which roll on the main,
Not for long do they smoothness and quiet maintain.

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CLV.

Six masses of infantry in silence advance,
And the distance is hazy with bayonet and lance;
Large bodies of cavalry in front move along,
Artillery preceding it—thirty guns strong.
The Russians had hoped Balaklava to take,
By forcing a march before the daybreak.

CLVI.

They somewhat surprise us, and seize each redoubt
Before our best troops have had time to turn out.
The Turks run away as the Russians approach—
Balaklava's redoubts are their lasting reproach.
The Cossacks pursue them with vengeance and speed;
Retreating they die and cold-blooded they bleed.

CLVII.

The Allies—the Frenchmen, the English, and Turk,
Hear the trumpets and bugles and fly to their work;
The men of the Light Brigade break not their fast,
Nor water their horses, when the shrill clarion blast
Brings them mounted and ranged on the slope of the hill,
Where they waited a deathless renown to fulfil.

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CLVIII.

The sons of the Gael,* in line on the right,
Are ready for duty—are eager to fight;
And divers war-groups of Turks, Zouave, French,
Take up a position on plain, hill, or trench.
All the rainbow's gay colours are painting the vale—
Blood-red is the one which by night will prevail.

CLIX.

The Standard of England majestically there,
Adorns the broad landscape and waves to the air;
The banner of Freedom—the ensign of Right,
Every eye that beholds it esteeming its might.
It warms the bold hearts of the brave British race,
Who death count as glory its honour to grace.

CLX.

The Tricolor flag floats with elegant wave
O'er the legions of France—legions dashingly brave;
Proudly they uplift the banner on high,
Proudly victorious it has waved to the sky.
Dashing and brilliant these martial bands war—
Soldiers from childhood, 'tis the life they adore.

* 93rd Highlanders.

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CLXI.

The gay Turkish colours with Crescent and gold,
Which the Mussulman soldiers so fondly uphold,
Assist in augmenting the chivalrous display
The valley assumes in its war-decked array.
The warriors and leaders are nerved for the fight,
Their armour is strong—it is "Right against Might."

The 93rd Highlanders.

CLXII.

NOW squadron on squadron fly up from afar,
Russian lancers, dragoons, and the gaudy hussar,
Till they form fifteen hundred of cavalry strong;
When they halt for a minute amazed, then rush on
To the red row of Highlanders, whose dress cheats their eyes,
For they think they are women—the Scottish Greys' wives.

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CLXIII.

Like a rock reef the Highlanders stand for the clash ;
Like a furious wave on the Russian horse dash—
As a wave nears the rocks so the cavalry meet :
Repulse from the British—they break and retreat—
They wheel—open files—right and left, and like spray
Are scattered : but others are coming this way.

The Scots Greys and Enniskilliners.

CLXIV.

HARK ! the sound of the trumpets, immediate and near,
Proclaim other squadrons on squadrons appear ;
They come, like a forest of sword and of lance,
To fight with the soldiers of England and France.
The brave Enniskillins form line with the Greys,
Numbering much less than half of the Russian's arrays.

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CLXV.

The Russian dragoons canter slowly down hill,
And change to a trot till they nearly stand still;
As they seem to despise our inferior strength,
Their first line being double our own in its length,
And three times as deep—they've a second the same,
And a strong expectation easy victory to gain.

CLXVI.

The trumpet's war-note, and the true British cheer,
Ring again and again on the echoing air;
A charge, and a few minutes' conflict, soon show
That the British have pierced the first line of the foe.
The heroes fight on with their numbers diminished,
So greatly outnumbered their day appears finished.

CLXVII.

But not so, however; at the next line they fly,
Resolved there to conquer or ready to die.
The Royal Dragoons are now joining the fight,
So unequally numbered—great God, give them might!
Valiantly! bravely! the battle must rage,
As furiously and fiercely the warriors engage.

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CLXVIII.

Death-strokes and life-guards each soldier's arm plies,
Steel flashing quick as the fire from their eyes;
Bloody streams gurgle and sodden the ground,
Wounded and dying are falling around.
"Well done, brave companions!" the General exclaimed;
They wave the light cap and a victory's proclaimed.

CLXIX.

The smoke of the cannon soon lifted on high,
Removing the muslin-like mist from the eye;
And now, on the ground whence the Russians have fled,
Are horsemen and horses—some dying, some dead.
A lull in the tempest, a calm on the main,
But caused them to look for its fury again.

CLXX.

The chiefs and their staff and their escorts now meet,
And, mingling together, with loud praises greet
The magnificent charge which the British have made,
And a rich satisfaction o'er each warrior played.
The Generals retire to a distance away,
And consult, for more battle is promised to day.

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The Charge of the Six Hundred.

CLXXI.

FROM the hills what a picture impressive's displayed!
The country romantic, in battle arrayed;
On bayonet and sabre the sun brightly plays,
And the soldiers' gay trappings gleam forth in his rays:
Whilst the tents, white as snow, spot the occupied ground,
And dead men and horses are lying around.

CLXXII.

A feeling existed, and whispers had sped,
Which questioned the Light Brigade's courage, 'tis said:
That feeling, like poison, had flooded their heart,
And passing events made them secretly smart.
No honours had decked them since eastward they came,
And they burned for a chance their detractors to shame.

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CLXXIII.

Young Nolan, a soldier expert with the sword,
Was a fiery spirit, whose heart was deep gored
By embittered inaction—a tiger in rage,
He longed for a fight, and was hot to engage.
His hope was soon followed by glorious chance,
And Nolan himself took the words "to advance,"

CLXXIV.

From his General despatched to the war-doomed brigade.
"Where to?" the Lord Lucan inquiry made.
"Sir, there are the enemy, and there are the guns—
It's your duty to take them:" 'tis so report runs.
Like stallions restrained, every soldier's eyes flash,
Though the instant assures them advance is most rash.

CLXXV.

They care not for death, for high glory they'll fight.
The world ne'er beheld more magnificent sight.
With grandeur and splendour they shine in the sun;
Strength, beauty, or grace sits on every one.
The horses' bits rattle, the war-trappings clank,
And the sabre-sheaths waver from spur-heel to flank.

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CLXXVI.

A glorious excitement speeds the blood through the veins—
Perceived in the horses by their press on the reins—
By the paw of the foot—by the toss of the head—
By the mane's disarrangement—by the impatient tread:
On the men a bright flush, like a bloom born to fade,
As the beauty on roses, tinged the faithful Brigade.

CLXXVII.

'Gainst an army of thousands, six hundred are faced—
An army arrayed, in position well placed;
Whilst thirty fierce guns through their ranks make a lane,
And a mile and a quarter they charge o'er the plain,
Batteries on right and on left they must pass,
Sprinkling the ground ere they reach the first mass.

CLXXVIII.

What fate may allot when the fight has begun
They know not! they care not! so honour is won:
Each feels that on him rests a brilliant display,
A glorious achievement, not fading away.
One moment they lift their brave thoughts up on high,
Believing they're saved if on duty they die.

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CLXXIX.

And what think their leaders? a dream it appears;
They know it means death, yet they venture no fears:
On them for an instant a picture must rise
Of their loved ones, away in a moment it flies;
To their mighty Creator they inwardly say,
"May Thy will and my duty be well done this day!"

CLXXX.

Mark him on the chestnut—a man full of years—
Much honour, much glory, Earl Cardigan bears;
As brave as a lion, as proud as a prince,
Not a tremor or doubt doth his aspect evince:
Still he must have discerned that the order, "Advance!"
Meant not rush to death where for victory's no chance.

CLXXXI.

A Peer of the realm and the Light Brigade's pride,*
His, his was the spirit on which they relied:

* From conversations on that subject with people of various classes, military and civilians, I find Lord Cardigan almost universally spoken of as the favourite of the public in a soldier's capacity, and the pride of the men of the Light Brigade, although he may have been unpopular with some officers.

The following extract from the letter of a studious literary man will bear out this statement:—

"I entirely agree with you as to Lord Cardigan and the L. D. charge at Balaclava. I always thought him most shamefully assailed, and more than once, by certain parties, and have said so."

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The soldiers delight with such chieftain to go—
Desperate opponent is he to the foe;
Dauntlessly, fearlessly, this warrior leads—
Bravely is followed, and glory succeeds.

CLXXXII.

One instant sufficed, as they glanced down the plain,
To assure them that few would return back again:
That instant a glorious spirit imbued
The heart of each soldier by death unsubdued;
A beautiful lustre moved o'er every face,
And a proud resignation their haughty brows grace.

CLXXXIII.

The trumpet has rung forth its clear clarion blast—
Great God, what a sight! and how short it will last!
They quicken their pace as they pass o'er the plain,
'Midst volleying cannon and bullets like rain:
Death thins their ranks, but they close every space,
And not for an instant they slacken their pace.

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CLXXXIV.

Dignified cavalry! bravely they sail,
Like a beautiful cloud in a moderate gale;
A silvery halo with radiant shine,
Like the sun on the cloud, decks the crest of the line:
As the cloud from the force of the wind takes new form,
So this phalanx vibrates to the force of the storm.

CLXXXV.

In their pride and their splendour, with desperate zeal
They pass by the batteries, not heeding their peal,
Nor the missiles of death, doing duty too well,
The pinge of the shot ringing many a death-knell;
They steadily gallop—the heavy guns near—
And bellowing thunder convulses the air.

CLXXXVI.

As from regions infernal they flash forth a flame,
Destruction and death their discharges proclaim:
Earl Cardigan cheering, and leading his troop,
Still keeps them together, undismayed by death's swoop,
Though many who rode there in vigour and pride
In honour were falling, with glory have died.

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CLXXXVII.

Dashing full at the army the brave remnant pass;
They cut down the gunners and through the dense mass.
Earl Cardigan's first on the foe with his steel,
Heroically others ride close at his heel:
Of that rare band of mettle, like the point of a lance,
He's the best bit of stuff in that glorious advance.

CLXXXVIII.

But denser the masses they charge in the rear;
Some bravely again in the front ranks appear;
By fighting so desperate, by chivalrous zeal,
By duty illustrious, by honour's appeal,
Oh, courage unequalled! who could gaze on the plain,
And deem that one horseman would see home again?

CLXXXIX.

Now back past the gunners they fight a retreat,
With the Russians dispersed by their first dashing feat;
Thus British and Russians are struggling before
These murderous cannon, those lions of war.
List, nations, how strife took unnatural shape—
Those gunners assailed their own soldiers with grape!

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CXC.

Like the swine, who devour the blood of their race,
These villanous gunners earn their kinsmen disgrace;
The fiercest of savages could not do worse,
Not Time in his power can remove this black curse.
Mingled English and Russians must here meet death's lot
—The last being murdered, by their own country shot.

CXCI.

Our wrecked band of heroes triumphant returned—
Triumphant; for glorious distinction they'd earned.
Nations shall cheer them, and beauty shall weep,
Of millions the hearts shall exultingly leap
At the tale of these heroes; generations to come
Will proudly refer to the glory they've won.

CXCII.

Those killed have inherited glorious death,
For right and for duty they've yielded their breath;
They have helped to emblazon the rich scroll of Fame,
Whatever their station, in glory they reign.
Beauties have prayed when their bodies have bled,
Angels have welcomed their spirits when dead.

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CXCIII.

Beauty and virtue with fervour have prayed,
Beautiful woman and virtuous maid;
Tears, by these angels in white, for the dead,
Tears with their prayers when retired have they shed.
Little you know, humble soldiers, the share
In the hearts you have earned of the noble and fair.

CXCIV.

What is this life but a road to the next?
With highways and byeways, and trouble perplexed;
What the advantage of lingering in pain?
The speedier the stroke comes, the greater the gain.
What the advantage to rust out and rot?
Doing no good deeds, you will soon be forgot.

CXCV.

Holy distinction, in duty to fall;
Glorious distinction, to fly to her call;
Noble distinction, to earn brilliant fame
For your sovereign or country, your kindred or name.
Soldiers and Light Brigade, this you have done,
A halo of glory for Britain you've won.

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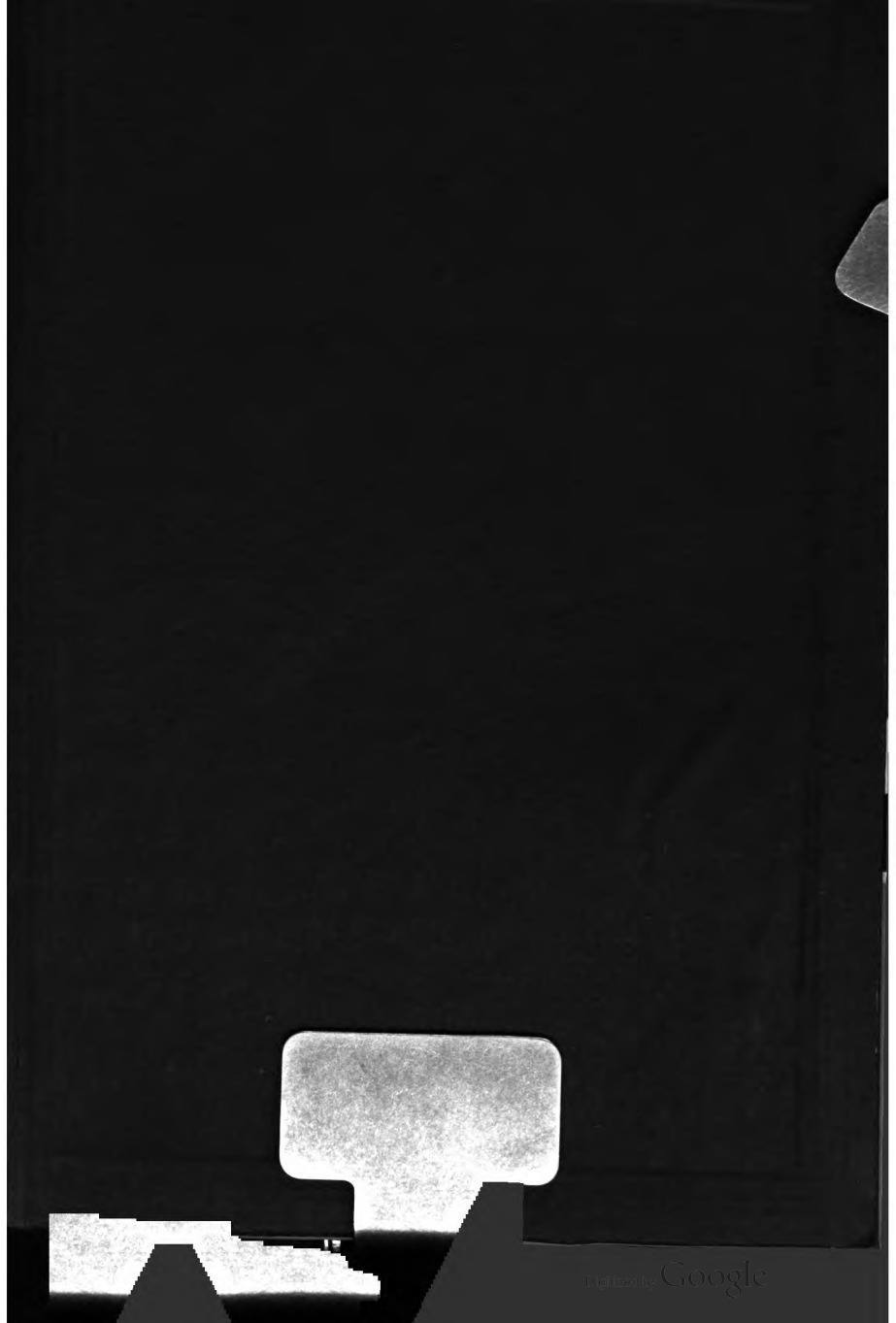
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